



# MEMBERS EXCHANGE

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF  
THE AMERICAN MEDALLIC SCULPTURE ASSOCIATION

2023 Vol. 42 ISSUE 2

## AMERICAN MEDAL OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

*Jim Licaretz*



## RUNNERS UP



*JL Walsh*  
&  
*Jeff Briggs*



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Readers,

This bitter sweet letter is my final letter as AMSA President. It's been a highlight of my life to serve this organization and its mission to advance the appreciation, production skills, and love of the art medal.

I'm also so excited to introduce our new President, Mark Benvenuto. I welcome his new ideas, and the fresh energy. He has been a long-time active member and supporter of AMSA

As a professor of chemistry at University of Detroit Mercy, he is not the typical medalist, but rather a top innovator and organizer, and one who is constantly in touch with the next generation of out-of-the-box thinkers -both qualities that AMSA needs more of right now.

As I write this, we are completing our election counts and I want to thank all who took time to vote. At first it may seem silly to vote when all our seats are uncontested, but let me tell you that your vote of support and encouragement is indeed meaningful to those of us here in the elected positions. To know that you want us here is fuel. If you have a minute, join me in welcoming Mark with an email of thanks and let him know what AMSA means to you.  
benvenma@udmercy.edu

As I step down, I look forward to more time to devote to other AMSA projects such as the Members Exchange, and our online presence. But above all, I aim to return to my personal studio projects that have been gathering dust.

Looking ahead for AMSA projects, we have secured two exciting venues for upcoming exhibits - one in LA county and one at Brookgreen Gardens. Dates to be announced.

Keep up the love of art medals!



# ARCHER M. HUNTINGTON AWARD

**T**he American Numismatic Society (ANS) is pleased to announce that the Archer M. Huntington Medal Award for Excellence in Numismatic Scholarship will feature a new medal designed by Eugene L. Daub.

The Huntington Award is conferred annually in honor of the late Archer M. Huntington, benefactor and President of the American Numismatic Society from 1905–1910. The original medal was designed by Emil Fuchs, and commemorated Huntington's gift of a building to the Society which coincided with the Society's 50th anniversary in 1908. The award was first presented to Edward T. Newell in 1918, and silver medals have been awarded to recipients up until 2021.

In 2022, as stocks of the original medal were exhausted, the Society commissioned a new piece from Eugene L. Daub for future recipients. An accomplished sculptor, Daub received the 1991 J. Sanford Saltus Medal Award. His work is found in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institute, the British Museum, and the Ellis Island Museum, among others, and with many public-sculpture installations across the United States. His design for the Huntington Award features an open book symbolizing scholarship on the obverse and the outline of coins on the reverse.

The ANS announced that Dr. Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert will be the recipient of the 2022 Huntington Award in a recent press release. Dr. Fischer-Bossert will be the first to receive the new medal created by Daub.

The American Numismatic Society, organized in 1858 and incorporated in 1865 in New York State, operates as a research museum under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is recognized as a publicly supported organization under section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) as confirmed on November 1, 1970.



# AMERICAN MEDAL OF THE YEAR

## 2023

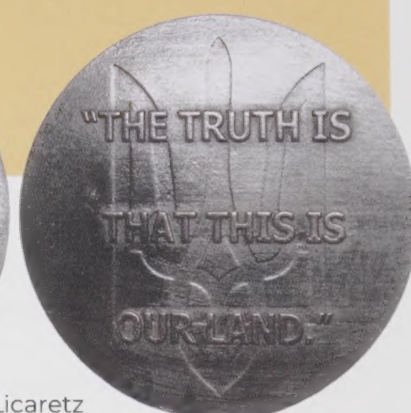
**J**im Licaretz has won the 2023 American Medal of the Year (AMY) award, for medals created in 2022, for his timely work in honor of Volodymyr Zelensky.

This is the second medal in a series honoring world icons. The first honored civil rights leader John Lewis, a runner-up in the 2022 AMY competition. The original is made with a 3-D printer, then a mold is made and the 3" medals are cast in bonded bronze; finally, Jim applies a wax patina by hand. The edition is limited to 200 pieces. They can be ordered for \$165 from the non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame by calling 818-225-1348. 100% of the profits will be contributed to charities helping Ukrainian victims.

This year the jurors honored two other medals as finalists: "Days of Silence – Nights of Song," by Jeremiah D. Welsh, the 2022 Brookgreen Medal, struck in bronze, in the long-running series issued by Brookgreen Gardens as a membership benefit, and "Hydroponic" by Jeffrey Briggs, a uniface 5" by 2¾" medal cast in marble with a bronze patina. The latter is available from Jeffrey for \$90, contact [jeffrey@briggssculpture.com](mailto:jeffrey@briggssculpture.com).

All entries, by 26 artists, are pictured here.

The new chair of the AMY committee, Jon Radel, is honored to be taking over for the founding chair, Mel Wacks, who has stewarded the award since its founding in 2014. He remarked, "I'm thrilled at the broad representation by artists this year, both those well known to all who collect American medals, as I do, but also relative newcomers who deserve broader exposure."



Jim Licaretz  
Volodymyr Zelensky  
90mm x 12mm bonded bronze



J.D. Welsh  
*Days of Silence,  
Nights of Song*  
3" bronze



Jeffrey Briggs  
*Hydroponic*  
5" x 2.75" x 0.25"  
cast marble with  
bronze patina



Amanullah Haiderzad  
*Tired Aman*  
3.5" mixed materials



Anna Knorr  
*Bee*  
4.5" bronze



Cathy Pilone  
*Snake Charmer*  
4.5" x 4" bronze

*Jurors: Philip Attwood, Honorary Research Curator of the British Museum, President of FIDEM, and editor of The Medal; Ellen Feingold, Curator of the National Numismatic Collection, Smithsonian Institution; Caleb Noel, Editor-in-Chief of The Numismatist; Steve Roach, Editor-at-Large of Coin World and Certified Member of the International Society of Appraisers; Alan Stahl, Ph.D., Curator of Numismatics, Princeton University; Mel Wacks, Member Board of Directors of AMSA and Director of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame; Ben Weiss, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Drexel University College of Medicine, medal collector and author ([www.historicalartmedals.com](http://www.historicalartmedals.com)), Member Board of Directors of Medal Collectors of America and formerly its webmaster.*



Dahli Strayer  
Richard McDermott Miller Tribute  
4.25" x 4.25" bronze



Diane Herbert  
Mermaid  
5.5" x 3" bronze



Geer H Steyn  
Olivier Messiaen  
75mm terracotta



Douglas White  
Summer  
4" x 2.25" cast bronze



E Richard Bonham  
Fossil  
4" brass, bronze, sterling  
silver and pewter



Jacqueline Lorieo  
Muhlenberg Medal  
100mm x 180mm x 10mm bronze



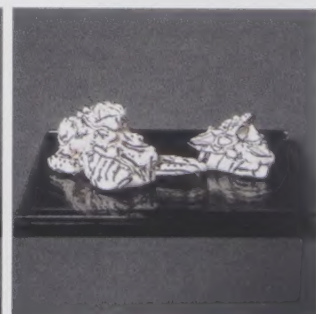
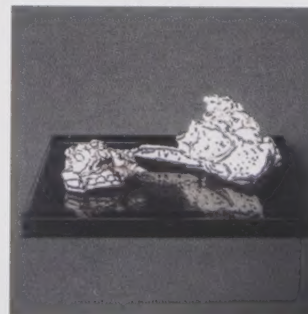
Janet Indick  
Mermaid



Eugene Daub  
Ruth Gruber  
2" x 2" struck bronze



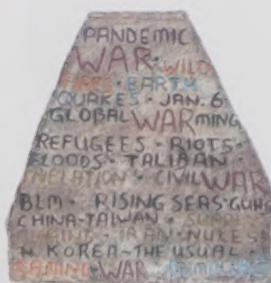
Eva-Maria Wohn  
Clowning Around  
3.5" painted Hydrostone



Janet Indick  
Homage to Dubuffet



Eva-Maria Wohn  
Ship of Hope  
4.5" Painted Hydrostone, wax and gilding



Janet Indick  
Red Riding Hood



Jeanne Stevens-Sollman  
Volodymyr Zelensky  
75mm x 85mm x 12mm bronze



Jim Licaretz  
*Enclosed*  
150mm x 74mm  
x 45mm  
Resin print with  
metallic waxes



Jeanne Stevens-Sollman  
Harriet Tubman / Underground RR Conductor  
97mm x 10mm bronze



Jim Licaretz  
*Memento Mori 2*  
93mm x 93mm x 15mm  
Bonded copper and brass cast



Jeffrey Briggs  
*Historic New England Medal*  
4" cast bronze



Joel Iskowitz  
*Semper Credo*  
39mm .999 fine silver



Linda West  
*Clean Up the Lake*



Jeffrey Briggs  
*6th Extinction Series*



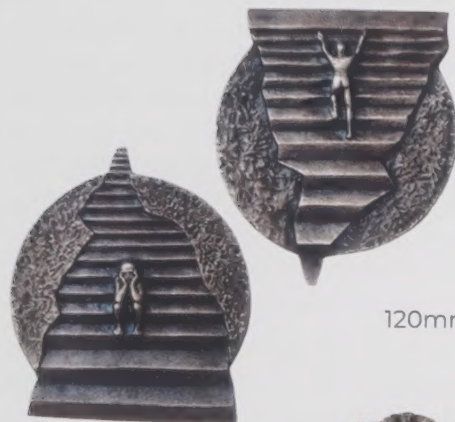
Lindley Briggs  
*Spring Marriage*  
4" x 4.5" x 0.375"  
Cast marble with bronze patina



Michael Meszaros  
*Origins*  
76mm x 4mm  
struck bronze



Ross Pollard  
*Liberty*  
1" struck bronze



Michael Meszaros  
*Success/Failure*  
120mm x 100mm x 6mm  
cast bronze



Ross Pollard  
*Moses Sailor*  
4" Copper electrotpe



Ross Pollard  
*Lion of Venice*  
1.25" cast bronze

Michael Meszaros  
*Ulterior Motive*  
145mm x 147mm x 35mm  
cast bronze



Samantha Senig  
*Skull and Snake*  
4.5" bronze



Paula Knorr  
*Rabbit*  
4.5" cast bronze



Polly Purvis  
*Hope is the Thing with Feathers*  
120mm x 50mm  
Steel hardware with  
gelatin silver prints,  
resin. Fabricated



Susan Taylor  
*Sweet Song of Celebration*  
60mm x 76mm x 7mm  
3D print painted with silver metallic coating  
patinaed with Iris Blue Gilders Paste



Polly Purvis  
*American Carnage*  
100mm Brass vintage  
clockworks, gelatin silver prints,  
brass bullet, gun charm.



Polly Purvis  
*Breathing Circle*  
150mm steel and brass



Tony Chibbaro  
*Palmetto*  
3" x 3.5" cast bronze

# ELECTION RESULTS 2023

**PRESIDENT** - Mark Benvenuto has been a long-standing collector of medals, going back to the 1980's, when he was a young Army lieutenant stationed in West Germany. Now, he is a chemistry professor at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) who has incorporated the use of graphite molds, low melting elemental metals and alloys for creating medals, as a project in his general chemistry laboratory. In the last two years, he has helped bring the AMSA Medal Exhibit 2021 to fruition, the on-line version of which can still be found at: [sites.udmercy.edu/amsa-medalxibit-2021/](https://sites.udmercy.edu/amsa-medalxibit-2021/). He has also hosted four medal making workshops in 2022 at UDM in which AMSA members, members of the Detroit Section of the American Chemical Society, and others, could spend one or more Saturday mornings creating their own medal. Recently he served as the editor for the book, "Chemistry of Medals," published through the ACS, in which several noted members of AMSA contributed chapters.

## **CO-VICE PRESIDENTS**

**Eugene Daub**, former AMSA President and returning VP, lives and works in San Pedro, California. Daub has completed over 40 major public art commissions. He has heroic bronze figures in three US Capitols, works in the collection of the British Museum, The Smithsonian Institute and is the recipient of the 1991 Saltus Medal. Daub serves on the board of the NSS. His education includes the University of Pittsburgh and The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. He has taught at Academy of Arts University in San Francisco, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and has also been giving Sculpture workshops for over 25 years, including Scottsdale Artists School and Brookgreen Gardens.

**Anne-Lise Deering**, returning VP, got a B.A. in art from Penn. State Univ. in 1977 in ceramics and worked in clay until she changed to making medals after taking John Cook's course in medallic art at Penn State Univ. in 1990. She then got interested in computer graphic design and took two semesters 1990- 91. She joined AMSA and FIDEM in 1990 and became AMSA's Newsletter Editor in 2000 and was elected Secretary in 2001 and held both jobs until 2009. She became 2nd Vice-president in 2011 until 2013 when she became president for two years. She currently lives in Washington State.

**SECRETARY** - Eva-Maria Wohn lives and works in Portland ME. She was introduced to the art of the medal by one of its masters - Eugene Daub. Sculpting medals is now a passionate pursuit and she has sculpted dozens of medals in various materials and subjects in a continuing attempt to master the medium and fully exploit its storytelling possibilities. She has served as the AMSA secretary and welcomes the opportunity to continue serving on the AMSA board, helping to introduce the art of sculpting medals to new audiences.

**TREASURER** - Doug White has been a member of AMSA since 1991. He served as 1st Vice President during 2009-2011 and continued on the Board of Directors until the present, serving as Treasurer since 2016. He has been making and collecting medals since attending the AMSA workshop and conference in Hartford, CT in 1992 and has exhibited regularly with AMSA and FIDEM. "I believe that our greatest challenge is to keep medallic art alive in the United States and stimulate and support the involvement of the younger generations."



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## NEWLY ELECTED (right):

Ross Pollard (b. 1982) lives in Blue Earth, MN where he helps manage Blue Earth Pastels, a boutique art supply manufacturing company. In his spare time he enjoys sculpting bas-relief plaques and medals using traditional methods. He represents the third generation in a family of artists, with both his grandfather and father having painted portraits professionally. Ross holds a degree in art history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is self-taught in the art of bas-relief, and author of the book *Bas-Relief Modeling*.

Alexander R. Krapf was born in Germany and studied Electrical Engineering at the University of Stuttgart. He was a German citizen till three years ago, when he finally took the plunge and became an American. For the last twenty-four years he has been self-employed at a software company he started with a friend. Alex developed an interest in medallic art in 2013, when he purchased a little chest filled with Society of Medalists medals at a furniture auction and has been an avid collector since. His favorite period is the early 20th century. Alex is a Fellow of the ANS and a member of the ANA. In 2014 he launched his website [medallicartcollector.com](http://medallicartcollector.com) and more recently, an updated version at [beta.medallicartcollector.com](http://beta.medallicartcollector.com). He is about to self-publish his first book titled "The Medallic Art of Laura Gardin Fraser." His goal is to make Medallic Art more popular and accessible through a series of publications that are not primarily scholarly but aim at the intersection of academics, collectors, and art enthusiasts. Alex has three adult children and lives with his wife and cat on the beautiful South coast of Massachusetts.



RE-ELECTED (above) Jim Licaretz, Graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Received the J. Henry Scheidt Memorial Traveling Scholarship as well as the Edmund Stewardson Prize for figurative sculpture and a Philadelphia Board of Education four-year scholarship. Other prizes include: Franklin Mint Medal of Honor for Sculpture, 1987; ANA Award for Excellence in Medallic Sculpture 2008; Rainey Master Sculptor, Brookgreen Gardens, 2014; Fellow, National Sculpture Society; US Vice Delegate FIDEM. Former sculpture faculty: Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia PA.; Otis School of Art and Design, Los Angeles CA.; Academy of Art College, San Francisco CA. Medallic works in the British Museum, The Royal Coin Cabinet, National Museum of Economy, Stockholm, Sweden, The American Numismatic Society, and the Smithsonian Institute. Retired sculptor-engraver at the United States Mint, Philadelphia, PA. Former AMSA President.

## HOLDOVER Board of Directors, until 2025 (left):

Stephen K. Scher  
Jeanne Stevens-Sollman  
Mel Wacks



# UNLEASHING YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL WITH AI ASSISTANCE

## 362 new medal designs in one hour!

Using AI assistance for the first time, I generated 362 new medal designs within one hour, despite having no background in sculpture creation or medal design.

When I shared the AI-generated medal designs with my friends, they were convinced that they were looking at real photos. The generated images were so realistic that no one noticed they were not physical objects.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly growing field that is transforming the way we live and work. It refers to the ability of computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, driving cars, medical diagnosis, and language translation. In recent years, AI has made tremendous progress, thanks to advances in computing power, algorithms, and data availability. Today, AI is being used in a variety of fields, from healthcare to finance, and is becoming increasingly integrated into our daily lives. As a rapidly evolving field, AI has almost endless potential applications. This article was originally written in Chinese and later translated and polished using AI technology.

As a ChatGPT power user, I rely on the tool to effectively manage my projects by identifying key focus areas for each stage and mitigating potential risks.



Sam Yang



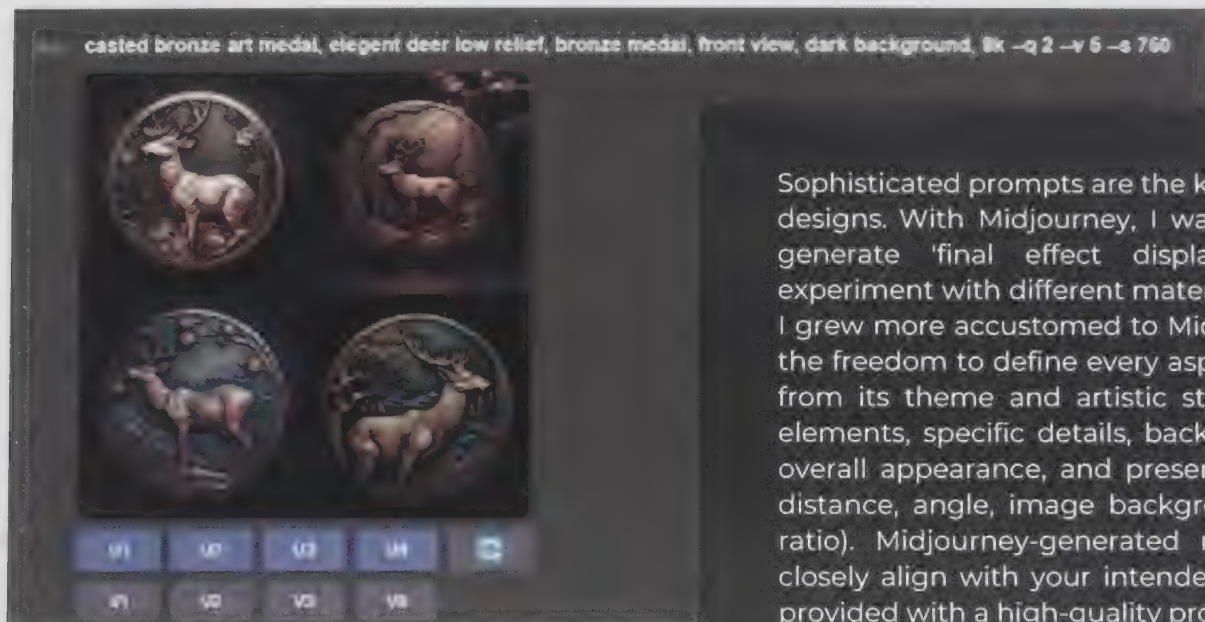
The author, Sam Yang (杨达), is an art medal enthusiast from Guangzhou, China, and works as a project manager at Schneider Electric.



Midjourney is the AI tool I used to generate medal designs.

In March 2023 I tried to use Midjourney to generate medal images. "Midjourney is a text-to-image generation app similar to OpenAI's DALL-E-2 and Stable Diffusion's DreamStudio, which uses tons of images (around 650+ million) found on the internet — to generate stunning images based on the text prompt provided." (Lars Nielson) It creates a realistic image of a given description, and can be used to generate images for specific needs.

Your only limitation is your own imagination.



The interface of Midjourney and an example

Sophisticated prompts are the key to good medal designs. With Midjourney, I was able to quickly generate 'final effect display images' and experiment with different materials and styles. As I grew more accustomed to Midjourney, I gained the freedom to define every aspect of the medal, from its theme and artistic style to its desired elements, specific details, background, material, overall appearance, and presentation (including distance, angle, image background, and aspect ratio). Midjourney-generated results will more closely align with your intended meaning when provided with a high-quality prompt.

Even styles from other fields of art, such as painting, can be applied to sculpture, using techniques beyond traditional sculpting methods. This means that with the assistance of AI, you can quickly experiment with innovation, limited only by your imagination and creativity. For instance, you could request AI to design a medal using titanium metal, incorporating 30% futuristic style and 70% Baroque style, as an example.

Below are examples to show a medal relief with Chinese ink painting style:



This AI superpower empowers artists to unleash their creativity and imagination, and push the boundaries of artistic expression. By leveraging AI assistance, artists can create more innovative and unique works, cementing their role as pioneers of creativity and innovation.

Furthermore, designers can now start with the endpoint created by AI, seeing the realistic effect of the design first, and then designing and manufacturing according to this final result.



## The imperfections of AI-assisted design at present.

While it is true that AI still has limitations and cannot always perfectly understand our needs, meeting personalized needs can be challenging at this time. AI-generated characters often have anatomical inaccuracies, such as four or six fingers, and unrealistic poses. However, AI technology is rapidly evolving and improving, and it is only a matter of time before it can meet our needs in a more efficient and accurate way.

In the near future, AI will not only be able to solve these small problems, but will also be able to precisely understand our needs, accurately adjust details, and directly generate corresponding 3D models. This has the potential to revolutionize the way we create medals, drastically reducing the time and cost of production through the use of 3D printing technology.



## Will AI replace artists?

While AI can judge and predict based on existing data and algorithms, it lacks the creativity and imagination of humans. Artworks are not just a combination of form and technique, but also contain human emotions and thoughts that cannot be completely replaced by AI. Although AI-generated art exists, it should not be used to replace human creativity. Instead, AI can generate new ideas and automate certain processes, but it cannot replace the human touch necessary for true art. While AI can create interesting and unique works of art, it cannot replace the emotion and passion that comes from a human artist. AI can enhance the creative process, but it cannot replace the human element that makes art so special.

## What's next?

It wasn't until I witnessed the power of AI as an endless idea generator that I realized its immense potential in assisting future creators with the design and production of medals. Imagine a scenario where a medal designer receives an invitation to create an art medal featuring the Statue of Liberty. With AI, they can explore all existing sculpture styles within hours and even creatively combine multiple techniques and styles for a visually stunning "realistic rendering" form. From hundreds of options, the designer can then choose a design and add their own elements or personal style to it. AI assistance can significantly shorten the creation cycle, reduce the cost of trial and error, and replace the traditional process of repeatedly modifying and exploring during creation.

After sharing these images, two independent medal engravers and one medal manufacturer contacted me, expressing interest in turning the AI-generated designs into physical medals, recognizing the meaningful impact of this technology.

As time marches forward, it is foreseeable that more and more people, whether professional artists or hobbyists, will begin to experiment with AI-assisted art creation. We must remain open-minded and embrace new developments. So, hold on tight and get ready to welcome the arrival of a new era.

# ITALIAN METHOD OF CREATING MODELING TOOLS

*Sandra Deiana*

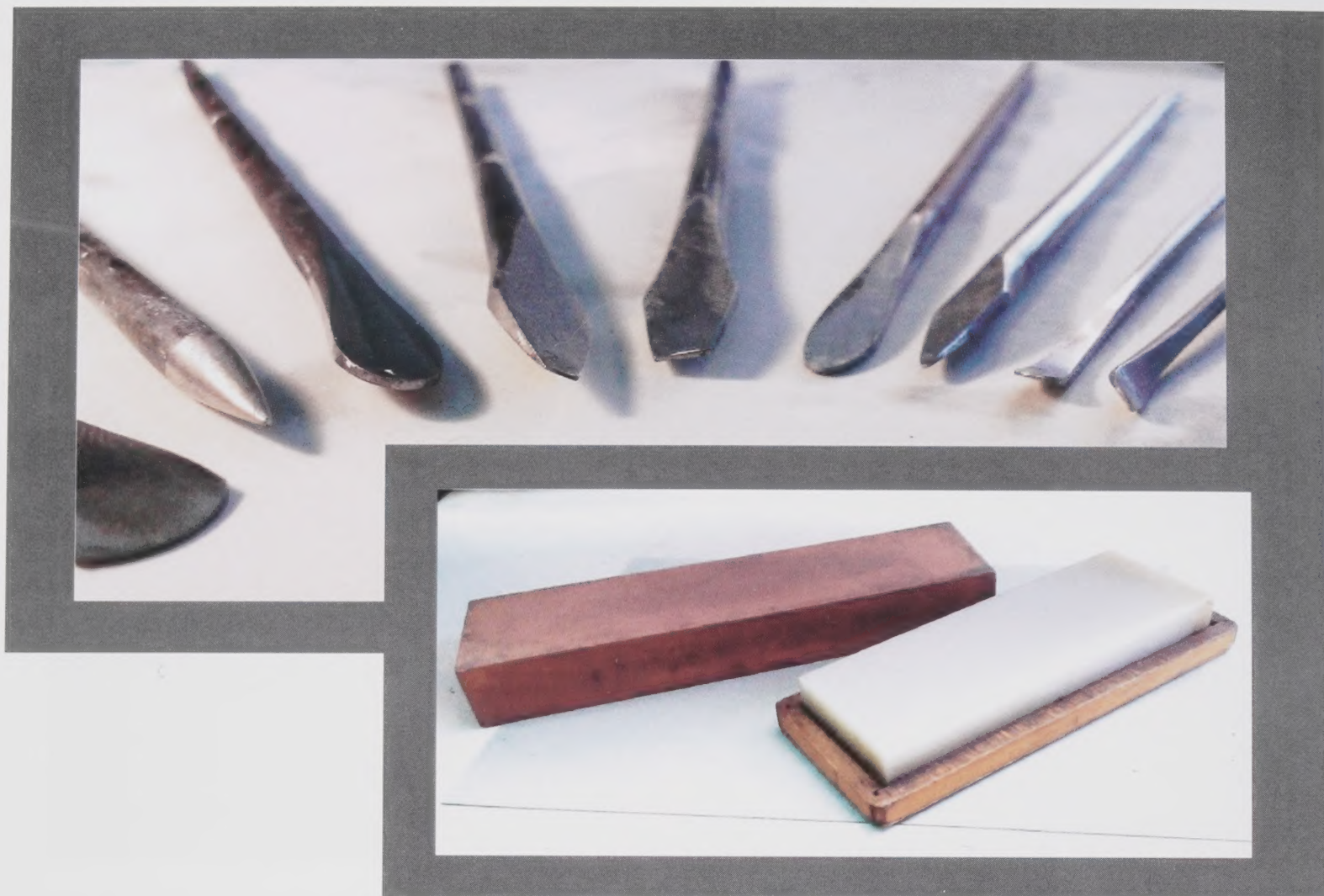


**A**rtistic modeling requires the use of specifically crafted tools known as modeling tools. These instruments are essential for working on bas-reliefs made of materials such as plasticine, soft pastes like clay or wax, as well as gypsum. The creation of modeling tools represents a fundamental initial step in acquiring the necessary skills for artistic material manipulation, enabling artists to express their creativity through sculpting.

To create these tools, various types of round-section bars with different shapes and sizes for the tips are required. For precise modeling of soft materials, such as in medal making, a solid aluminum rod with a diameter of approximately 2 mm (0,07 inches) is used. In this case, laundry hangers can be an excellent option for recycling materials. Aluminum, being a malleable material, does not require heating and can be easily worked cold. By shaping the aluminum rod, sticks of around 15-20 cm in length are obtained. Once the sticks are obtained, the ends are processed further.

On the other hand, for gypsum modeling tools, mild steel rods with a diameter of approximately 5 mm (0,2 inches) are used. The ends of the rods are shaped using two different methods. In the case of mild steel, the ends are forged while hot, while for aluminum, a cold working process is performed. In both cases, each end is given an approximate shape, which is then refined using grinding wheels and metal files.

It is important to note that for plaster modeling tools, it is necessary to provide a bevel to the ends. This precaution prevents the creation of undesired undercuts during the modeling process, especially when inscribing text, for example. Once the desired shape for the tip is achieved, the tool enters the final refinement phase, which involves metal polishing. This is accomplished using two different stones: one with a medium grain and another known as "Arkansas," a very fine-grained stone typically used for the processing and finishing of blades and knives.



During this final refining step, it is crucial to apply a lubricant, such as oil, to the stones. This serves to reduce friction between the tool and the stone, preventing damage to the metal. Additionally, it is advisable to occasionally test the "stroke" of the tool on a piece of test plaster to assess the resulting mark. The mark is considered perfect only when it leaves no scratches and the metal surface appears like a mirror.

In addition to the round and flat tips, artists have the option to create various types of tools according to their specific needs. For example, tools can be crafted to create specific marks that, when combined, form interesting textures. These tools, known as "skin" tools, allow artists to achieve unique and detailed effects in their modeling works.

The creation of modeling tools represents a crucial milestone in an artist's path, as it fosters a deeper understanding of the necessary tools and techniques for shaping volumes and details in sculptures.

Through the processes of forging, refining, and polishing, artists develop the manual skills and the

sensitivity required to achieve high-quality results in their artistic creations.

The customization of modeling tools offers endless creative possibilities, allowing artists to express their unique vision and creativity. Careful material selection, meticulous craftsmanship, and attention to detail are all essential elements in producing high-quality tools that best support the artistic modeling process.



# CASTING TIN-BISMUTH MEDALS IN PLASTER MOLDS

Ross Pollard

**T**he experiment outlined below was inspired by a series of recent Members Exchange articles on low temp bismuth alloys written by Mark Benvenuto and his student research colleagues. Encouraged by the authors' success in gravity casting this metal into open graphite molds, I conducted a spinoff experiment with a closed plaster mold and some 281°F 58/42 tin-bismuth alloy purchased online.

To get started, I glued plaster copies of two uniface medals onto a board. When the glue was dry, I sealed everything with shellac and used plasticine to add a pair of sprue forms. I then brushed on a thin coat of petroleum jelly separator, erected a molding box around the board, and poured a plaster mold.

After the plaster hardened, I separated the mold from the pattern board and set it aside to dry (Figure 1). On day eight, it felt dry to the touch, so I clamped on a backing board and melted some tin-bismuth alloy on the stove. As soon as the ingot melted, I skimmed off the dross and poured molten metal down the two sprue openings.

When the castings were cool enough to handle, I cut off the sprues and did some polishing with 0000 steel wool and pumice. The medals looked good but had a slight surface dimpling that I can only describe as being akin to a hammertone finish. This irregularity is visible on parts of the canine medal shown in Figure 2.

Hoping to improve upon my first results, I poured another round of casts while the mold was still warm. This time, a crack formed across the canine half of the mold, but the other side produced a sharp cast with little to no dimpling. This medal is shown in Figure 3.

In conclusion, the technique of casting tin-bismuth alloys in plaster shows promise. More tests are needed, but I am impressed with how easy this metal is to work with. As for the surface irregularities, I expect heat from the molten metal probably vaporized some residual moisture in the plaster and/or traces of petroleum jelly separator. In the future, I hope to solve this problem by cleaning my molds and drying them in a food dehydrator with an adjustable thermostat.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



AMSA  
FLASHBACK

→

2004, Exhibit  
Forest Lawn Museum  
Los Angeles California

